

**April 30, 2020**

**Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program  
Semiannual Section B.1 Report on Section 312 Evaluation and Metrics  
For the Period from October 1, 2019 – March 30, 2020**

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## B.1.A. SECTION 312 EVALUATION PROGRESS

Virginia's most recent evaluation began in the fall of 2014 with the Virginia CZM Program responding to 36 evaluation questions regarding administration of the program, protection of coastal habitat, coastal hazards and sea level rise, coastal water quality, coastal-dependent uses, public access, governmental coordination, and descriptions of major achievements and challenges. NOAA then conducted an online survey of Virginia CZM stakeholders and partners, and in May 2015 conducted interviews of key partners on identified target areas. A public meeting was held on May 12, 2015.

Stakeholders interviewed by the NOAA team described the program as *partner-oriented* and *having effective partnerships with local communities and regional and non-profit groups*. "Flexible to meet the needs of locals" and "inclusionary" were some of the ways stakeholders expressed partnership demonstrated by Virginia CZM.

The three target areas identified by the NOAA team to evaluate the Virginia CZM Program were: 1) Restoring and Protecting Coastal Habitats and increasing Public Access, 2) Ocean Planning, and 3) Coastal Resilience. Preliminary accomplishments and recommendations identified by NOAA in each target area are as follows:

### Restoring and Protecting Coastal Habitats and Increasing Public Access

Accomplishment: The Public Access Authorities are providing a new tool for public access acquisition and management through a local policy framework enabled by state legislation.

Accomplishment: The Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program's place-based restoration efforts have been highly successful, leveraging significant funding from partners and resulting in "on the ground" coastal habitat improvements.

### Progress This Period (October 2019 – March 2020):

The Virginia CZM Program reported wrapping up its 12-year effort to restore eelgrass and reintroduce bay scallops on the Seaside of the Eastern Shore in the October 2019 Section B report. However, since then VIMS created a slightly longer version of the video that is available at: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xp\\_0GjoellY&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xp_0GjoellY&feature=youtu.be)

Through an addition of \$575k in NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office funds to Virginia CZM's FY18 award, a grant was given to the VA Marine Resources Commission to restore about 14 acres of oyster reefs in the Lynnhaven River. MRC accomplished the project with about \$100k less than was budgeted. Remaining funds were reprogrammed to a living shoreline design in Mathews County and the VCU Rice Center oyster shell recycling program.

The Virginia CZM Program continues to work with DCR on acquiring additional land acquisition projects on the Eastern Shore of Virginia in Northampton County and the lower Chickahominy (likely in Charles City County) using FY 17, 18 and 19 funds.

VA CZMP initiated a three-year focal area in October 2017 to be implemented by state agencies and Planning District Commissions - Promoting Sustainable Coastal Industries: Shellfish Aquaculture and Ecotourism. Working with two of coastal Virginia's economic strengths, aquaculture and tourism, the VA CZMP is supporting projects that will help boost the shellfish aquaculture and ecotourism industries through research, planning and visual tool development (see Section A reports for FY17, 18 and 19 Tasks 71-75). Program visibility is also included in this focal area since this is a critical time for Congress and the public to understand the value of CZM funds. Ensuring that acknowledgement signs for projects that VA CZMP has funded over the years are still in place, and updated as needed, is critical to program visibility and is one of the subjects of this focal area. The FY17 and 18 grants are finishing up and the FY19 grant is, underway. This focal area also includes protection of vulnerable natural and community coastal resources through Tasks 82-84 (see Section A report for progress on these tasks).

FY17 funds (about \$20k) that had been allocated for updated signage were reprogrammed to restore a public access walkway on the Seaside of VA's Eastern Shore that was constructed with CZM funds in 2004. The boardwalk restoration is complete and the signage is designed and will be installed soon.

#### Ocean Planning

**Accomplishment:** The VA CZMP's leadership in regional ocean planning has brought together diverse stakeholders to plan for the location of future offshore facilities while minimizing user conflicts and impacts to coastal resources.

**Recommendation:** The NOAA Office for Coastal Management encourages the VA CZMP to continue its leadership role in regional ocean planning and to plan for how the work will move forward over the next five years, including continued emphasis on ways to diversify and leverage funding.

**Progress This Period (October 2019 – March 2020):** The CZM Program Manager continued to lead ocean planning efforts for the Mid-Atlantic. The Mid-Atlantic Committee on the Ocean (MACO) was officially established with the Virginia CZM Manager serving as its first Chair through June 30, 2019. Since then she has served on the MACO Steering Committee. Throughout this period, the Virginia CZM Program Manager continued to lead efforts to develop data on species shifts (see final product attached to the April 2020 Section A report for FY18 Task 94.02). Through a VA CZM grant to The Nature Conservancy, animated data depicting shifts in core abundance for 18 fish species have been added to the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Data Portal. She also continued to lead the Marine Debris Reduction Work Group and MARCO's Ocean Mapping & Data Team. Links to documents produced by those two groups are in the FY19 Task 1.01 Section A report for this period.

The Marine Debris Work Group continued work on its \$149k grant from the NOAA Marine Debris Program to expand Virginia's balloon release reduction social marketing campaign to the entire Mid-Atlantic region. Monitoring of balloon debris was conducted in each state during the fall of 2019. The work group began collaboration with 4 Mid-Atlantic aquariums (NY, Camden, Baltimore and VA) to test and disseminate messages about not releasing balloons.

The VA CZM Manager continued to serve as the Virginia representative on MARCO's Management Board. Materials developed by MARCO are available on the MARCO website at <http://midatlanticocean.org/>.

### Coastal Resilience

**Accomplishment:** The VA CZMP's leadership in coastal resilience has enhanced the capacity of local partners for adaptation planning and promoted the use of living shoreline approaches to enhance community and ecological resilience.

**Recommendation:** The NOAA Office for Coastal Management recommends that the VA CZMP further define the program's "niche" as it relates to coastal resilience.

**Progress This Period (October 1, 2019 – March 31, 2020):** The Virginia CZM Program continued to address this recommendation by focusing its efforts on building coastal resilience into two key areas identified in the Section 309 Coastal Hazards Strategy. The Strategy targets community resiliency (the built environment) and shoreline resiliency (natural and nature-based features). Projects funded through the Strategy should ultimately lead to new enforceable policies that advance coastal resiliency in these two areas. Resilience-building projects are also being funded through the Virginia CZM Program's Focal Area.

The first year of the Strategy (October 2016 to September 2017) focused on acquiring the data necessary to develop local shoreline management plans, and on providing training for shoreline contractors and local government officials responsible for shoreline management decisions. Two regional projects designed to improve community resilience in Northern Virginia and Hampton Roads were also completed.

Progress for the second year (October 2017 to September 2018) included more work to promote better shoreline management and the use of living shorelines, but also two community resilience projects. The first was designed to promote local adoption or expansion of the community rating system under the national flood insurance program, while the second will provide coastal communities with a tool to comprehensively evaluate their current resiliency efforts.

Progress for the third year (October 2018 to September 2019) included the following:

- evaluating living shoreline performance
- refining the shoreline management model and running new analyses
- supporting regional adaptation planning in Northern Virginia

- analyzing first floor elevations in Hampton Roads
- developing a Tidal Shoreline Policies Handbook
- shoreline management training for local officials
- shoreline evolution analyses, evaluating localities for Community Rating System participation
- promoting the beneficial use of dredged material
- developing a database of potential resilience-building projects

Coastal resilience projects currently underway for October 2019 to September 2020 include:

- evaluating the impacts of flooding on road network access in coastal Virginia
- living shoreline contractor training and shoreline erosion analysis
- refining the RAFT (Resilience and Adaptation Feasibility Tool) for broader implementation
- enhancing and promoting a coastal resilience project proposal database for Virginia
- expanding the use of natural and nature-based infrastructure to enhance coastal resiliency
- living shoreline sea level resiliency: performance and adaptive management
- regional collaboration to build community resiliency in Northern Virginia
- coastal hazard vulnerability assessment for Hampton Roads

The Virginia CZM Program's FY 20 Draft Application includes the following seven resilience-related projects.

- Evaluating the impacts of flooding on road network access in coastal Virginia (309 Hazards Strategy)
- RAFT evaluation for Middle Peninsula Localities (309 Hazards Strategy)
- Expanding participation in the community rating system (309 Hazards Strategy)
- Utilizing Planning District Commissions (PDCs) to Advance Ecosystem and Community Resilience (CZM Focal Area Grants to 8 coastal PDCs)
- Promoting Ecotourism to Support Conservation of Conserved Lands and Resilient Communities (CZM Focal Area Grant)
- Climate-Adaptive Nearshore Natural and Nature-based Restoration Projects in the York and Piankatank Rivers and Mobjack Bay (CZM Focal Area Grant)